

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please cancel claims 1, 3-5, 7-9, 11-12 and 14-18 without prejudice or disclaimer of their underlying subject matter.

Please amend the claims as follows.

1-5. (canceled)

6. (currently amended) A pneumatic tire comprising:

a tread portion having a plurality of main grooves therein, said plurality of main grooves extending in a tire circumferential direction along a tread surface; and

a side wall portion of the pneumatic tire contacting a shoulder of said tread portion, said shoulder being outward in a tire width direction, wherein:

at least one interior main groove of said plurality of main grooves is located at the center of said tread portion and extends from said tread surface,

~~at least one~~ an exterior main groove of said plurality of main grooves is between at least one interior main groove and said shoulder, none of said plurality of main grooves being between said exterior main groove and said shoulder,

said ~~at least one~~ exterior main groove has a first groove wall, a second groove wall, and a thin rib,

said first and second groove walls extend from said tread surface to the bottom of said ~~at least one~~ exterior main groove, and incline outward in said tire width direction from said tread surface ~~toward~~ the bottom of said ~~at least one~~ exterior main groove, and

said thin rib protrudes from said bottom of said ~~at least one~~ exterior main groove, a space between said thin rib and said first groove wall being larger than a space between said thin rib and said second groove wall, and

at said tread surface, said first groove wall is parallel in said tire circumferential direction with said second groove wall.

7-9. (canceled)

10. (currently amended) ~~The pneumatic tire according to claim 6, wherein~~ A pneumatic tire comprising:

a tread portion having a plurality of main grooves therein, said plurality of main grooves extending in a tire circumferential direction along a tread surface; and

a side wall portion of the pneumatic tire contacting a shoulder of said tread portion, said shoulder being outward in a tire width direction, wherein:

at least one interior main groove of said plurality of main grooves is located at the center of said tread portion and extends from said tread surface,

at least one exterior main groove of said plurality of main grooves is between at least one interior main groove and said shoulder,

said at least one exterior main groove has a first groove wall, a second groove wall, and a thin rib,

said first and second groove walls extend from said tread surface to the bottom of said at least one exterior main groove, and incline outward in said tire width direction from said tread surface toward the bottom of said at least one exterior main groove,

said thin rib protrudes from said bottom of said at least one exterior main groove, a space between said thin rib and said first groove wall being larger than a space between said thin rib and said second groove wall, and

each of said plurality of main grooves are straight grooves.

11-12. (canceled)

13. (currently amended) ~~The pneumatic tire according to, wherein~~ A pneumatic tire comprising:

a tread portion having a plurality of main grooves therein, said plurality of main grooves extending in a tire circumferential direction along a tread surface; and

a side wall portion of the pneumatic tire contacting a shoulder of said tread portion, said shoulder being outward in a tire width direction, wherein:

at least one interior main groove of said plurality of main grooves is located at the center of said tread portion and extends from said tread surface,

at least one exterior main groove of said plurality of main grooves is between at least one interior main groove and said shoulder,

said at least one exterior main groove has a first groove wall, a second groove wall, and a thin rib,

said first and second groove walls extend from said tread surface to the bottom of said at least one exterior main groove, and incline outward in said tire width direction from said tread surface toward the bottom of said at least one exterior main groove,

said thin rib protrudes from said bottom of said at least one exterior main groove, a space between said thin rib and said first groove wall being larger than a space between said thin rib and said second groove wall, and

a height of said thin rib is made lower than said tread surface.

14-18. (canceled)

Please add the following new claims.

19. (new) The pneumatic tire according to claims 6 wherein each of said plurality of main grooves are straight grooves.

20. (new) The pneumatic tire according to claims 6 wherein a height of said thin rib is made lower than said tread surface.

21. (new) The pneumatic tire according to claims 6, 10 or 13 wherein said at least one exterior main groove is near said shoulder.

22. (new) The pneumatic tire according to claims 6, 10 or 13 wherein said second groove wall is between said first groove wall and said shoulder.

23. (new) The pneumatic tire according to claims 6, 10 or 13 wherein said first groove wall extends from said tread surface to the bottom of said at least one exterior main groove.

24. (new) The pneumatic tire according to claims 6, 10 or 13 wherein said at least one exterior main groove is wider after inflation of the pneumatic tire than before said inflation.

25. (new) The pneumatic tire according to claims 6, 10 or 13 further comprising bead portions, a carcass layer, and bead cores.

26. (new) The pneumatic tire according to claims 6, 10 or 13 wherein a height of said thin rib is made equal to said tread surface.

27. (new) The pneumatic tire according to claims 6, 10 or 13 wherein a height difference between the tip of said thin rib and said tread surface is set in a range of 0 to 4 mm.

28. (new) The pneumatic tire according to claims 6, 10 or 13 wherein said space between said thin rib and said second groove wall is 4 mm or smaller.